

INTRODUCTION TO AIR QUALITY PERMITS

Air quality permits, like city and county building permits, are part of doing business. In Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties, permits are issued by the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, a regional governmental agency responsible for protecting air quality.

WHY REGULATE EQUIPMENT ?

The impact of air pollution on public health, the environment, and the economy has prompted regulation by State and Federal Government and has established the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District as the responsible local agency.

The District's permit system, authorized by State law, is the primary tool used to ensure that business comply with air quality control requirements. In this way, the permit system benefits everyone who lives or works in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties.

WHO NEEDS PERMITS ?

Permits are required by State law. They are needed:

- Before installing new equipment that can cause air pollution

- Before modifying existing equipment that can cause air pollution

- Whenever a business changes ownership

- Whenever equipment is transferred from one location to another

Businesses of all sizes fall under District rules and regulations. Examples of large businesses that require permits include power plants, cement plants, quarry crushing and screening operations and crude oil recovery.

Examples of small businesses include dry cleaners, gasoline service stations, auto body shops, paint spray booths, and surface coating and printing operations.

Engines which are used to generate electricity on a regular or emergency basis, or which are used to directly power other stationary equipment also require a District permit. Portable engines that move from site to site as part of their normal operation can be registered with the California Air Resources Board as part of the Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program. If a portable engine is registered under this program a District permit is not required.

WHAT ARE PERMITS FOR ?

When the District issues a permit, it indicates that the equipment used should be able to meet all air quality standards.

A District permit authorizes the emissions of air pollution only under certain conditions. Permit conditions can include total fuel usage, maximum pollutant concentrations in exhaust gases, and the volatile content of surface coating materials.

You must get a permit *before construction begins* on any new or modified facilities. If you don't, your construction could be delayed, and you face possible civil and criminal penalties.

WHERE TO BEGIN

Two types of permits are required:

- 1) An *Authority to Construct* is issued as a preconstruction approval based on the equipment design,
- 2) A *Permit to Operate* is issued after the installation and inspection of the equipment and a finding that it complies with all District rules and regulations.

Both permits are issued based on a single permit application. The fees required are based on the size and complexity of the project's equipment, and the cost of District evaluations and inspections.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A PERMIT ?

If you are unsure about the District's permit requirements, a District engineer is available for a pre-application meeting to answer questions and offer assistance.

If you need a permit you must submit the following, either in person or by mail:

- A permit application form and filing fees
- A detailed description of the equipment and process
- Detailed information about materials, operations, and emissions

The engineer assigned to handle your application will contact you if additional information is needed.

Permit processing time depends on the complexity of the application, but by law cannot exceed 180 days. Most permits are issued in a much shorter time.

WHEN DO I NEED AN AUTHORITY TO CONSTRUCT ?

You must apply for and receive an *Authority to Construct* before starting construction on either new equipment or on a modification to existing equipment that can emit air pollutants.

District engineers will evaluate your application to ensure that the project can comply with all District rule and regulations. If design changes are necessary, this early evaluation will allow you to make them in the planning stage.

The evaluation is based on information contained in your application. It is up to you to demonstrate that the equipment can operate in compliance with all District rules and regulations.

WHEN DO I RECEIVE A PERMIT TO OPERATE ?

After an *Authority to Construct* has been issued and construction is completed, District staff will inspect the facility while it is in normal operation. They will verify that the equipment performs in accordance with all rules and regulations. If it does, the District will issue a *Permit to Operate*, which will include specific conditions of operation.

Your *Permit to Operate* must be renewed annually.

You must have a valid *Permit to Operate* before operating any equipment which can emit air pollutants. If you operate without a permit, you face legal action including civil or criminal penalties. The only exception is for the initial start up of new or modified equipment installed after the issuance of an *Authority to Construct*.

WHAT ABOUT FEES ?

There are two fees that all permit holders need to know about. One time *Application Filing Fees* are required for each piece of equipment or permit unit at the time of initial application submittal. These fees include all costs necessary for the evaluation of the permit application and issuance of the *Authority to Construct* and the *Permit to Operate*. You should contact a District engineer to determine the correct fees and obtain a Permit Application Fee Determination Sheet which details the necessary fees. For complex projects, additional fees may be required to reflect the actual time spent evaluating the application and making inspections and compliance determinations for the issuance of the *Permit to Operate*.

Every permit holder is required to submit information about the prior year's operation to the District annually. This is used to calculate emissions from the equipment and to determine the *Annual Renewal Fee*. If you don't submit the requested information or pay the annual renewal fee your *Permit to Operate* will be revoked. Operation without a permit is a violation of District rules and State law and will result in significant penalties.

This is only an introduction and overview of the permit and fee system contained in the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District's Rules and Regulations. If you have any questions about the regulatory requirements or information required for a complete application, please call the Engineering Division at 831 647-9411. Additionally the *Guidelines For General Permit Requirements* contains more detailed information about the permit process.